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Claim 5 (twice amended). The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyurethane-forming reactive mixture is applied onto the pressure-sensitive adhesive material.

REMARKS

This application pertains to a novel process for the continuous production of self-adhesive articles. In the novel process, a reactive mixture of a polyol component and an isocyanate component is continuously applied to an adhesive-coated backing material, and is reacted *in situ* on the adhesive-coated backing material to form a polyurethane backing.

Claims 1-8 are pending.

The claims have been amended to more clearly recite that the reactive mixture is continuously applied to the adhesive-coated backing material, and to generally improve the clarity and specificity of the claim language.

No new matter has been added. The reactive nature of the two component mixture applied finds support at, for example, page 5, line 31; page 10, line 29 and page 11, line 3. The continuous nature of the application of the reactive mixture finds support at page 6, lines 19-25.

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Edenbaum et al (US 4,675,232).

In the Edenbaum process, however, a polyurethane dispersion is first formed, then mixed with a stearic acid salt and an optional crosslinking agent, the mixture is then frothed at high speed by agitation and/or injection of gas, to form a foam; which is then applied to a backing. The composition which is applied to the backing in the Edenbaum process already comprises an already formed polyurethane, albeit a dispersion thereof. Edenbaum neither teaches nor suggests the application of a reactive mixture of a polyol and an isocyanate to a backing, and reacting it on the backing to form a polyurethane.

Although the Examiner comments that Edenbaum et al disclose the formation of a polyurethane by combining a polyol and an isocyanate in a mixer; the reaction is completed and neutralized before the reaction product, i.e., the polyurethane is applied to the backing (Col 5, lines 39-43).

Edenbaum cannot therefore render Applicants' claims obvious, and the rejection of claims 1, 4, 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Edenbaum et al (US 4,675,232) should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Schumann et al (U.S. 6,129,983). Schumann, however, is not a continuous process, such as that claimed herein. At the bottom of Col. 7, Schumann describes the formation of a paste

in a planetary mixer which, following the addition of the isocyanate, is coated in a customary manner onto a customary commercial paper. This is quite different than Applicants' process, where the reactive mixture is prepared continuously, directly before its application, from two components which react with one other (page 6, lines 19-25).

Thus, Schumann et al cannot be viewed as teaching or suggesting Applicants novel process, and the rejection of 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Schumann et al (U.S. 6,129,983) should now be withdrawn.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Schumann et al in view of the so-called "admitted prior art". The Examiner relies on the "admitted prior art" for a teaching of various dehesive media. The differences between Applicants' process and that of the Schumann reference are far greater than the use of specific dehesive media, as discussed above. The use of specific dehesive media in the Schumann process will not in any way convert that process to Applicants', and the rejection of Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Schumann et al in view of the so-called "admitted prior art" should accordingly now be withdrawn.

In view of the present remarks it is believed that claims 1-8 are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of said claims by the Examiner is respectfully requested and the allowance thereof is courteously solicited.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If any extension of time for this response is required, Appellants request that this be considered a petition therefor. Please charge the required petition fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Additional Fee

Please charge any insufficiency of fee or credit any excess to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,
NORRIS, McLAUGHLIN & MARCUS
By 
William C. Gerstenzang
Reg. No. 27,552

WCG:tmh
220 East 42nd Street - 30th Floor
New York, New York 10017
(212) 808-0700

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Hon. Assistant Commissioner For Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on July 24, 2002


William C. Gerstenzang

Date: July 24, 2002

MARKED-UP COPIES OF AMENDED CLAIMS
SHOWING CHANGES RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS VERSIONS

Claim 1 (amended). A process for continuous production of self-adhesive articles, wherein

- a) essentially one polyol component is placed in a container A and essentially one isocyanate component is placed in a container B,
- b) the polyol component and the isocyanate component are continuously supplied to and mixed in a mixer, to form a polyurethane-forming reactive mixture,
- c) the polyurethane-forming reactive mixture [composition thus mixed] is continuously applied to a first backing material which is coated with a pressure-sensitive adhesive composition and moves optionally [preferably] at a constant speed, the isocyanate component and polyol component reacting on the adhesive-coated backing material to form a polyurethane composition,
- d) the resulting laminate, comprising the first backing material, pressure-sensitive adhesive composition and polyurethane composition, is passed through a heat tunnel, in which the polyurethane composition cures,
- e) the laminate is wound in a winding station.

Claim 2 (twice amended). The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a second backing material is [supplied] applied to the polyurethane-forming reactive mixture [composition of the laminate] on the first backing material and, [if desired] optionally is peeled off after the heating tunnel.

Claim 5 (twice amended). The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyurethane-forming reactive mixture [composition] is applied [to the first backing material coated with a] onto the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on said first backing material [composition, said application taking place in such a way that the polyurethane composition is present on the pressure-sensitive adhesive composition].